

SAVE THE CHILDREN DAY

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
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SAVE THE CHILDREN DAY

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1981

UNITED STATES SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 9:50 a.m. in room 318, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher J. Dodd, presiding.

Present: Senators Dodd and Cranston.

Senator DODD. Good morning, everyone.

Let me begin this morning by welcoming each of you to this hearing to commemorate May 1, 1981 as "Save the Children Day" on behalf of the International Economic Subcommittee. I want you to know how proud we are to recognize the outstanding work done by the Save the Children Federation in our own country and throughout the world.

I am also looking forward to hearing the children's agenda and to our real experts on the problems facing families today. Senator Mathias, the chairman of our subcommittee, has asked me to say how very much he wanted to be here this morning and how sorry he was that a schedule conflict made it impossible for him to attend.

Let me also welcome, of course, our dear friend and the gentleman who has over the years chaired this same hearing, Senator Cranston of California, who has most graciously agreed to be here again this morning to participate in this hearing.

Next year Save the Children will celebrate its golden anniversary. For almost half a century, its programs have helped make life more meaningful for young people. Here, in the United States, you can find Save the Children projects teaching Vietnamese refugees English; providing modern day-care facilities in Appalachia, and converting old buildings into community centers in our inner cities.

Those of us on the Foreign Relations Committee are especially impressed with its outstanding work in the areas of nutrition, education, housing, health, and a host of other vital areas throughout the world—from Tunisia to Tuvalu and from Italy to Korea.

I am particularly pleased to see that Save the Children has been so active in Latin America. I have a personal interest in that region that goes back several years to when I worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic. Just this month, I visited Central America to view firsthand the conditions in some of these troubled nations.

In my judgment, the programs that Save the Children has underway in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to improve agricultural efficiency and rural development can make real contributions

to improving economic growth and living conditions. I hope you will keep up the good work.

At today's hearing our 20 witnesses who are all aged 9 through 13 will be sharing with us the thoughts of some 20,000 young people. All of these children took the time to describe for the President what they feel are the biggest problems confronting families here and around the world. I have reviewed some of the material and there are two things that struck me as being especially important.

First, we are hearing from genuine experts, people who have first-hand information and knowledge. When these young people talk about what it means for a father to lose his job or about how inflation affects the food prices and family budgets, they are not just repeating something they read in school or saw on television—they know what they are talking about.

Second, I am extremely impressed with how many of these young people have heartfelt concerns for the problems of children in other countries throughout the world. Many of the letters remind us how important it is to assist underdeveloped countries with food and medical supplies and economic aid. These days, that kind of concern is not nearly as widespread among adults as it should be. Foreign aid is the easiest program to attack because, as the political science professors will say, it has no "constituency". I am very pleased that there is a constituency for that kind of conscience and responsibility among American children.

Finally, I want to record that Westport, Conn., is both the headquarters of Save the Children and also the home of three of our witnesses this morning. As a Senator from Connecticut, it makes me very proud that our State is such a leader in this important work.

Before we hear from our first panel to share with us the Children's Agenda for Action, I would like to ask my colleague from California, Senator Cranston, if he has any remarks that he would like to make. Again, thank you for coming here this morning and for having taken the lead in years past in conducting this hearing yourself.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you, Senator Dodd, I am delighted that you are carrying on the tradition that we launched in another committee of giving children an opportunity to testify before Congress with their views on important issues.

I welcome all the children that are here today, those of you at the witness table now and those waiting or in the audience. I also welcome some students from Germany that, I understand, are with us today.

Many, many letters to Congress come from many people, adults and children, and some remarkable letters are received by the President, by Members of the House and by Members of the Senate from children with very interesting ideas.

The President the other night noted a letter that he received from a child, warning him that he would have to be giving his speeches in pajamas soon if he did not make a fast recovery.

I received a letter once from a child suggesting an energy policy. This child said, "Find out if oil has another name and look for it under that name." [Laughter.]

The letters from children often display very serious concern about very serious issues and how these issues will affect their lives. Most of

all, I find great concern from young people about war, nuclear war; about waste disposal; about the environment generally; about equal opportunity for all of our people; about justice and crime, and the quality of education and very similar matters in these issues.

I congratulate the children for their deep interest. Those who have these early concerns will be very effective citizens of our democracy in the years ahead. Many of them will be leaders. All of them, I trust, will be voters and help make the decision at the ballot box in a wise way.

I thank Save the Children and specifically Marge Benton who is at the table with the first witnesses, and David Guyer for their leadership. I look forward to these hearings continuing and our having the opportunity to receive advice over the years from some of the very youngest Americans.

Thank you all very much, and thank you, Chris.

Senator Dodd. Thank you, Alan, very much. [Applause.]

It is not often at hearings we get applause, is it, Alan?

Let me first of all ask the chairperson for Save the Children, Marge Benton, who has a statement this morning; and then we will go right into the testimony of our first panel of witnesses. Marge?

**STATEMENT OF MARJORIE CRAIG BENTON, CHAIR,
SAVE THE CHILDREN FEDERATION, WESTPORT, CONN.**

Mrs. BENTON. Thank you, Senator.

I am Marjorie Craig Benton, the chair of Save the Children Federation.

I want to thank you, Senator, for holding these hearings today on our fourth annual Save the Children Day.

You know, children have a wonderful way of going directly to the heart of things. We all heard that on Tuesday night in the letter that President Reagan read from Peter Sweeney. I remember 2 years ago, when Alan Cranston was chairing these hearings, he said it was the only time in his Senate career that when he asked a question, that he got a straight answer.

Today, Senator, you will be presented with testimony not only about children and concerning children, but from the children themselves. They will share with you directly their concerns on the issues that are important to them and to their families.

I want to stress that the problems facing children face children everywhere, whether it is Connecticut or Kampuchea, or Arizona, or Africa. We should recognize today that in any crisis that disrupts society it is always the children who feel it first and worst. I can personally think of countless situations in which the most effective way to measure the ills of society is by looking at our kids.

In a famine it is the children who die first. When we see television pictures of a disaster, we see the pictures of children's faces. The people of Atlanta know that their security is being threatened, but it is their children who are dying. And, as you will hear today, Senator, the economic difficulties confronting us in this country take a terrific toll on our children.

We have here today over 200 children from all over the United States. We also have over here 20,000 letters, written by kids, from

all over the country. They could not be with us today, but they wanted to express their concerns—and by the way, after this hearing is over the children will get on a bus and proceed to the White House where David Stockman will receive these letters on behalf of the President.

Senator DODD. I may have a letter or two I may add to that.
[Laughter.]

Mrs. BENTON. Great.

What is in these letters and what you are going to hear today are the things that kids care about and kids worry about.

Finally, I think, all of us at Save the Children carry in our hearts and in our thoughts the 1.3 billion children around the world in whose interests we all must act in this country.

The issues you will hear about today are primarily economic ones. If there is a common thread, if there is a common lesson to be learned, it is that the economic policies chosen by this Government really ultimately affect the quality of the life of each child. I can assure you that the children you will hear today have the same concerns that you would hear from children from all around the world.

Before I introduce the most important witnesses, I want to thank you again, Senator, for making today possible, and I also want to express my deep appreciation to our good friend, Senator Charles Mathias, the chairman of this subcommittee, for all of his fine work on behalf of children.

Our first witness is Mark Usher who lives in Washington, D.C. He likes to play football, and he likes math and reading. So, we are going to hear first from Mark Usher.

PANEL CONSISTING OF MARK USHER, WOODRIDGE SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.; COURTNEY ROGUES, HUTCHISON SCHOOL, HERNDON, VA.; JEFFREY NELSON, GLOUCESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, GLOUCESTER, VA.; NICOLE ROLAND, KENILWORTH SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.; KEVIN KILGORE, LONG LOTS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, WESTPORT, CONN.; IBR TROWE, GLEN HAVEN SCHOOL, SILVER SPRING, MD.; MEG NEAL, BREN MAR PARK, ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Mr. USHER. Good morning, Senator Dodd, committee members, and friends.

We come to you today, Save the Children Day, to present our Children's Agenda for Action for the family. This agenda, the fourth in a series compiled by Save the Children, summarizes the leading concerns of more than 20,000 children from every State in the Nation.

Senator DODD. Senator Cranston and I have asked for some expertise up here, some assistance, who are going to sit up here with us and help us with some questions as well.

Would you tell me your name?

ERIN BOGGS. Erin Boggs.

Senator DODD. This is Erin Boggs. What is your name?

MAX DUVAL. Max Duval.

Senator DODD. Max.

ERIKA OLIVER. Erika Oliver.

Senator DODD. Erika.

DUNG THAPANAWAT. Dung Thapanawat.

Senator DODD. These people are going to assist us during the hearing.

COURTNEY ROGUES. Inflation. The most overwhelming problem faced by the family today is inflation—the high cost of food, shelter, gas, and clothing. We hear our parents complain and argue about the bills. Those of us who are on food stamps or have parents who are unemployed are particularly aware of the tension caused by not having enough money for the family. Some of us even find ourselves giving our parents money from our piggybanks to help them pay for food and gas.

Many of our fathers have two jobs and our mothers also must work to make ends meet. Now that our parents work longer hours we do not get as much attention as we used to. We know our parents love us and have to work, but somehow it does not seem fair that our mothers and fathers are not around as much as we would like them to be.

Many of us also have noticed that we eat more starchy foods rather than meat as a result of the high cost of food. We have had to cut back on our vacations, Christmas and birthday presents, and must wait much longer for new clothing and shoes.

We hope you will help us by lowering prices and raising our parents' salaries. We believe that inflation is a major cause for the other problems mentioned in our agenda—crime, child abuse, divorce, and world hunger.

JEFFREY NELSON. Crime. Our world is filled with robberies, muggings, murders, kidnappings, and rape. We hear about violence on the news and some of us have relatives or friends who have been victims of crimes. We are alarmed by the killings in Atlanta, and hope that the police will be able to make life for children safe again. Many of us believe that violence and crime is largely due to people needing money for their families. Whatever the cause, it is too near and too real a danger for all of us. Please, help us make our world a safer and more peaceful place for everyone.

Senator DODD. Pull that microphone real close to you.

NICOLE ROLAND. Child abuse. We have heard about parents beating or burning their children. We want to find ways to help these children. We suggest hot lines be set up so that the children can alert the police or social workers if they have been beaten. Counseling for parents or moving the children to foster homes also might help solve the problem. Most important of all, we believe it is the responsibility of the community—teachers, doctors, neighbors—to watch out for the children and get involved if it appears that the child has been beaten.

KEVIN KILGORE. Divorce and the breakdown of family relations. Many of us live with just one parent. The other parent either visits us on weekends or has completely disappeared from our lives. Divorce is hardest on the children. We are forced to choose between our mother and father—when we really love both of them. We find it hard to discuss our feelings with anyone—even our friends.

Even those of us living with both of our parents notice that there is often tension in our homes. Mothers and fathers sometimes do not talk to each other—they only argue.

Many of us feel so strongly about divorce that we think it should be outlawed. Others believe there should be special classes or tests for couples before they get married—to be sure they are ready to be parents. Most of us realize there is very little our Government can do about this situation—but we want you to know how we feel.

IBR TROWE. World hunger and poverty. Help us help children in Third World countries get nutritious foods, clean water to drink, and an education. We cannot sit still and watch as children in Africa die of hunger and disease. We realize that it is important that taxes be cut this year—but the United States is a wealthy nation and we believe that our Government can help save children's lives by sending seeds, teachers, and equipment to developing countries so that they can grow their own food.

We can help too, by raising money at bake sales or by holding a bikeathon and sending the money to organizations which help children. Please, work with us on this important issue. Together we can save many lives.

MEG NEAL. Save the Children has asked us to discuss not only the problems facing the family but to offer any solutions we might have. We have given our best ideas, but we realize that we need action, also.

We are willing to work with you, our Nation's leaders, in solving the problems of the economy, crime, child abuse, divorce, and world hunger. All are issues which make life difficult for the family today.

Thank you for listening to our Children's Agenda for Action.

Senator DODD. Before you all get up, we neglected to get everyone's name. We got Mark's name when he started. Why not introduce yourselves and where you are from, what school you are coming from?

COURTNEY ROGUES. I am Courtney Rogues, and I go to Hutchison Elementary in Herndon, Va.

JEFFREY NELSON. My name is Jeffery Nelson, I go to Gloucester Middle School in Virginia.

NICOLE ROLAND. My name is Nicole Roland. I am from Washington, D.C., and I go to Kenilworth Elementary.

KEVIN KILGORE. I am Kevin Kilgore and I go to Long Lots Junior High in Westport, Conn.

IBR TROWE. My name is Ibr Trowe, I go to Glen Haven Elementary in Silver Spring, Md.

MEG NEAL. My name is Meg Neal and I go to Bren Mar Park Elementary, Alexandria, Va.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much. Before proceeding, Senator Cranston, do you have any questions you would like to ask the kids?

Senator CRANSTON. I have no questions at this time.

Senator DODD. All right, why not move on to the next panel, if we can?

I would ask that our next group of witnesses, before they share their comments with us, introduce themselves and also tell us where they are from.

Our first witness is Jonathon Liba. Jonathon, why not introduce yourself and tell us where you are from and what school you go to. I will ask each of the witnesses before you share with us your remarks, to do the same thing.

PANEL CONSISTING OF JONATHON LIBA, ASSUMPTION SCHOOL, WESTPORT, CONN.; TINA CRUMP, BARNARD SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.; KEVIN BOOK, JOHN EATON SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.; LYNN COPP, COLEYTOWN SCHOOL, WESTPORT, CONN.; IVAN SPELLS, AUBREY SCHOOL, AUBREY, ARK.; SHANTELLA EDWARDS, AMIDON SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.; JOHNA ROBINS, GLOUCESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, GLOUCESTER, VA.

JONATHON LIBA. My name is Jonathon Liba, I am 12 years old, and I am in the sixth grade of Assumption School in Westport, Conn.

Senator DODD. These are not letters that you have written; is that correct? These are letters that are part of the 20,000 letters that have come in?

JONATHON LIBA. Yes.

Senator DODD. And you are sharing some of the comments and thoughts that were included in those 20,000 letters.

JONATHON LIBA. Yes; that is right.

This letter is from Joe McCully who is 10 years old and is in the fifth grade in Dysart, Iowa. This deserves the attention of all the Congressmen here today.

DEAR PRESIDENT REAGAN: This is the biggest problem facing families today, and here is what I think should be done about it.

I think one of the crucial problems with families is money. Now-a-days husbands or wives cannot make enough money to support their families, pay the tax, or even have a house. I think that if inflation is defeated, and taxes are lowered, more families can be better off. Also, please read this letter to your Congress so they can help.

Sincerely yours,

JOE MCCULLY.

TINA CRUMP. My name is Tina Crump. I am 11 years old. I go to Barnard School, and I am from Washington, D.C.

This letter is from Virginia Mae who is also 11 years old, but she is only in the third grade. She lives in a small town in West Virginia.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: This is the biggest problem facing families today—and here is what should be done about it.

Bring the food prices down. My mom can't buy us fruit and meats to eat because it costs too much. We have to eat gravy and beans all the time. Thank goodness for school lunches.

Love,

VIRGINIA MAE.

KEVIN BOOK. My name is Kevin Book. I am in third grade and I am 8 years old. I go to John Eaton School and I am from Washington, D.C.

This letter is from Loretta, who is 12 years old and in the sixth grade in Illinois.

DEAR PRESIDENT REAGAN: I think unemployment is the worst problem in the U.S. today. My family does too because my dad is laid off work and my dad has to feed four children, my grandmother, and my mother, but we just don't have the money. My dad also has to support my two brothers that are going through college, and pretty soon my sister.

I think the second biggest problem is inflation. It is hurting everybody in some way.

Sincerely,

LORETTA.

Senator DODD. Speak right into that microphone so we can hear you.

LYNN COPP. My name is Lynn Copp, I am in sixth grade and I go to Coleytown Elementary School in Westport, Conn.

Because so many fathers are out of work or just don't make enough money, our mothers have to take jobs, too. This causes other problems. This letter is from Lorie who is 10 and in the sixth grade in California.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: This is the biggest problem facing my family today. Our family is having trouble with jobs. My mom and dad work. They don't have time to take care of us. My mom and dad only have time to take care of us on Saturday and Sunday. We don't know how to take care of ourselves.

Mr. President, this is what I feel should be done about jobs. I hope my dad and mom have time to take care of us. Reagan, help our family.

Sincerely yours,

LORIE.

IVAN SPELLS. My name is Ivan Spells. I am in the sixth grade. I am 12 years old. I am from Aubrey School and I live in Aubrey, Ark.

I have just arrived from Arkansas, this is my first visit to Washington. In Arkansas a lot of families are worried about the high price of gasoline. They are also concerned about our getting a good education; plus, they are worried about Government spending.

This is a letter I wrote about the problems in Arkansas.

DEAR MR. REAGAN: I am writing to you about my school. They had a meeting one day and they decided to close the school. But I think it should stay because they would take the children in the fifth grade and kindergarten to a school in Moro. But the sixth grade that will be in the seventh grade next year will ride to Moro and then will be taken to Marianna and when they do, that will be 50 miles a day and with the price of gasoline that would be very bad. Plus, they have created eight more jobs and there were already eight jobs at this school.

Sincerely,

IVAN SPELLS

P.S.—We are spending too much money for those inaugural gowns which are not necessary. They should be able to have the dress for four years. You can cut down the Congressmen's pay because they make almost as much as you.

SHANTELLA EDWARDS. My name is Shantella Edwards. I am 10 years old. I am in fifth grade and I attend Amidon Elementary School in Washington, D.C.

A lot of children wrote letters about their concern for less fortunate children, poor children in other countries around the world who live in countries that are not as rich as the United States.

This is my own letter that I wrote on this topic.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Children in Africa are starving and many babies and grownups are suffering. They are having more children and they are dying from malnutrition.

What should we do about this terrible tragedy? I suggest that we all join hands and help the needy. We can have telethons and we can go to Africa and give them medicine and food.

Somalia is one of the many places where tragedies such as the ones I stated are occurring regularly. Once a lady with twins and a limited amount of milk had to decide which one of the twins would be fed and which one would starve. The doctors wanted her to feed both children but remember, she only had enough milk to feed one child. Things such as this don't happen in the United States; therefore, we must send food, medicine, doctors, nurses, and teachers to these poor developing countries.

JOHNA ROBBINS. My name is Johna Robbins. I am 11 years old and in sixth grade. I attend Gloucester Middle School in Gloucester, Va.

Not all of us have had the opportunity to visit other countries to meet other children, and to see the problems for ourselves. The girl who wrote this letter, Elizabeth Dempsey, was lucky, she has.

She is 9 years old and is in fourth grade at Glenside Elementary School in Glenside, Pa. This is what she has to say:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: This is the biggest problem facing families today—food. This is what I think should be done about it. I have lived in Brazil for a year-and-a-half. I have seen starvation. It is an ugly sight. People there cannot find a job to get money for food. The Government should give these people land for growing things, then the people could grow and sell these things. They should keep some of the produce. With the money they earn, they could buy animals and raise them. They could also eat some. Then everyone would have something to eat.

Yours truly,

ELIZABETH C. DEMPSEY.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much. I wonder, before you give up your chairs to the next panel, some of you might share some of your own views.

You have read these letters from people who are about your own age. They have identified food problems, nutritional problems, health problems; the problems of, obviously, inflation and unemployment—jobs.

I wonder if some of you might have some of your own thoughts and comments about some of the letters that you have read, and some ideas that you might have. You are going to meet Mr. Stockman a little later, I gather, and are going to be delivering to him a bunch of letters.

If you had a chance to say anything to Mr. Stockman, who might have a chance to talk to the President, what would you like to tell him? Do any of you have any thoughts? How about you, Tina, do you have anything you would like to say?

TINA CRUMP. Yes.

Senator DODD. What would you like to say?

TINA CRUMP. I would like to say about the Children getting cold in the school.

Senator DODD. Is that a problem?

TINA CRUMP. Yes.

Senator DODD. Did you have that problem last winter?

TINA CRUMP. Yes.

SENATOR DODD. Did the principal tell you why?

TINA CRUMP. No.

Senator DODD. Did he talk about energy prices?

TINA CRUMP. Yes.

SENATOR DODD. He did a little bit.

How about anybody else, does anybody else want to talk about any other problem that you think we should know about up here, anything else?

Well, all right. Thank you all very much for reading those letters.

We have our third panel coming up this morning. I would ask them to approach the witness table.

We are going to do the same thing we did with the last panel, and I would ask each one of you to introduce yourself, where you are from and what school you go to, and then read or tell me how you feel about these problems that affect children.

What is your name, young lady?

PANEL CONSISTING OF ROSA ACOSTA, BANCROFT SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.; SHAWN BECKERMAN, CROFTON WOODS SCHOOL, CROFTON, MD.; ROBBY ROBERTS, GLEN HAVEN SCHOOL, SILVER SPRING, MD.; ONIG DOMBALAGIAN, HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL, BOWIE, MD.; JANET MADILL, BREN MAR SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA, VA.; NICKIE JOHNSON, POTOMAC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ROSA ACOSTA. My name is Rosa Acosta, I am 12 years old. I am in the sixth grade and I go to Bancroft School.

I am from Mexico and have lived in this country for 3 years. The letter I will read is from a boy, Enrique Rexach from Rio Piedros, P.R. His letter talks about fear of crime. It is typical of letters from all over the United States, not just in Puerto Rico.

I will read it in Spanish, first, then I will read it in English.

[The letter was read in Spanish.]

ROSA ACOSTA. Now I will read it in English.

The most urgent problem facing families today is crime. Many murders and robberies occur weekly. The Puerto Rican family lives in jail. Children can no longer go out on the street without worrying. One has to be prepared for anything. In other words, we no longer have any freedom, not even of our own human rights. We all live frightened and constantly worried and terrified knowing what could happen to us.

I think a solution to this problem would be to put more police on the streets to patrol, and to give more employment opportunities and pay a fair wage.

Sincerely,

ENRIQUE REXACH.

[Reply by Senator Dodd in Spanish.]

Senator DODD. Who is the next witness?

SHAWN BECKERMAN. My name is Shawn Beckerman, age 9, Crofton Woods School, Crofton, Md.

Many children wrote letters about crime in the home, the crime of child abuse. This is a very short letter, so I hope you will listen carefully to what John, a second-grader in Wyoming has to say about his family.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: This is the biggest problem facing families today. My mom and dad fight too much. My dad throws beer bottles at me and gets me mad.

Your friend,

JOHN.

Senator DODD. A pretty sharp message; was it not?

ROBBY ROBERTS. I am Robby Roberts form Glen Haven Elementary School. I am in the fifth grade and I am from Silver Spring, Md.

The letter I will read is from Stephen Booth who is 9½ years old and in the fourth grade in Tarrytown, N.Y. While many children wrote about crime in general terms, Stephen has a special reason to be distressed about crime. While Stephen's father was being a good Samaritan in helping someone out, he was shot to death.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: This is the biggest problem facing families today, illegal handguns. A burglar who had an illegal handgun killed my father in January of this year. The recent attempt on your life also shows us, the American people, that we must have nationwide gun control.

I feel that laws should protect all American families from people who have illegal handguns. Congress should act now to pass laws for nationwide gun control.

Please, dear Mr. President, make sure that this matter be taken care of without hesitation.

Sincerely yours,

STEPHEN BOOTH.

ONIG DOMBALAGIAN. Hello, my name is Onig Dombalagian. I come from Holy Trinity School. I am in the fifth grade and I live in Bowie, Md.

One of the topics most frequently mentioned in the letters was divorce and problems of communication between parents themselves and between parents and children. The children are very sad about this. A 10-year-old named Carey who is in the fourth grade in New Jersey wrote this:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT. This is the biggest problem facing our family today, desertion. My father left me and my family last May. I haven't heard from him since. My mother is supporting us and I don't think it is fair. I think there should be more responsible men and women in the world. Also, there are too many divorces in the world. It should be a law that there should be no desertion of children. Please make stronger laws to protect children.

Yours sincerely,

CAREY.

JANET MADILL. Hello, my name is Janet Madill and I am 12 years old. I am in sixth grade and from Bren Mar School in Alexandria, Va.

This letter continues talking about divorce. It is from Valerie who is 9 and in fourth grade in Illinois.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT. This is the biggest problem facing families today—and here is what should be done about it.

I feel divorce is a problem facing children and their families. When divorce happens, two people that are married break up. Children, if any, are the ones most emotionally disturbed. Many times the child (or children) think that they caused the divorce.

I have had personal experience with divorce. My mother and father were divorced when I was 2½ years old. I lived with my natural mother for a while. She remarried and had another child and didn't want me any more. I went to live with my dad because he was remarried. I was lucky, he did remarry and his wife loved me. It wasn't hard for me to adjust because I was met with open arms. But some children aren't so lucky.

A possible solution is to have centers that children could go to and talk about their problems. Another thing is that we could have more divorce "hot lines." We could have public service messages so that people would know about those programs.

The biggest problem facing families today is divorce. The ones who become emotionally disturbed are the children. If children aren't helped when they are young, they may grow up to have problems.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much.

NICKIE JOHNSON. My name is Nickie Johnson. I am substituting for Sonja Peyton. I am 9 years old. I am in fourth grade and I go to Potomac Elementary School.

You have heard about many problems that concern the children of this country and others around the world. While this letter was probably written with the kidnappings in mind, it really represents all the problems children face.

This is the last letter, written by George Horton, 12 years old. He lives in Englewood, N.J.

We hope you will listen carefully to this message from us, the family of the world's children.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I am writing you a letter asking you to help save our children because we need all the people we have. If this keeps happening, we will not have anyone to love and keep warm. I am 12 years old, and I want you to know how I feel and how lots of other people feel.

Why can't you send people to try to stop it or teach the kids self-defense? No matter if they're black, white, red, or brown, we love them all. We are like a river filled with colored fish that play and love each other.

Senator DODD. That is from George Henry Horton.

Thank you very much for your comments and your letters. Now, I would like to ask you before you retire, do you have anything you would like to add at all, any of your own comments?

You have read some letters, do you have anything you would like to be telling me and other Members of Congress about other problems you think we have, and what you might suggest as to how we can overcome them? Any other suggestions from anyone here?

How about you there in the middle, do you have any suggestions, any other problems?

ONIG DOMBALAGIAN. I do, as a matter of fact.

Senator DODD. I had a feeling you might have a few opinions. [Laughter.]

ONIG DOMBALAGIAN. I think gun control is one of the things we should have in America because most of the deaths occurring here are from guns.

I think what should happen here is that people should stop making guns or selling them because the more guns that are here, the more people are going to try and get them and try and kill people.

Senator DODD. Let us do something interesting. We have heard from someone on the panel. Now, we have a full room back here and everyone has been very patient and very quiet in the back of the room.

Let us have a little exercise in democracy. Let us take the issue of gun control. That is a hot issue, as you know because of the recent attempt on President Reagan's life.

I am going to ask everybody in the back of the room—if you can hear me back there—as well as the panel up here. Let us do a “aye” and “nay” vote on gun control. I am going to ask the question how many in the room would favor gun control, and then I am going to ask how many would not favor gun control and think the present laws we have are enough.

I am going to ask all those who are in favor of gun control to stand up, and we will try and do a rough count. Then I will ask those who would think the existing laws are enough and we do not need any new laws.

So, how many think we ought to have stronger gun control laws? Why not stand up, all those who think we need stronger gun control laws.

I wish you were all Senators and Congressmen. [Laughter.]

I cannot even count that many, I cannot count that high. Now, sit down and give those a chance who think the existing laws are enough. Does anyone want to stand up that thinks the existing laws are enough. Don't be ashamed if you think the existing laws are enough. All right.

I think we have a fairly clear indication, anyway, from this group. You think we ought to have stronger handgun control.

Let me see if we can do some more questions to get some more people involved. Why don't some of you come on up. Do we have to have everyone sitting down? This is awfully staid, this hearing this morning. Can we get you to come up, come a little closer? Why does not everybody get up and come up closer? Come up, up front.

Let us have some questions, I want to know some more things.

How many of you here are familiar with El Salvador, how many of you have heard of El Salvador before? Did you hear about it in the news? Do you think we ought to be helping out in El Salvador?

How many of you think we ought to be helping out in El Salvador with economic assistance, sending food and things like that?

All right. Let me ask you, how many of you think we should be sending military advisers to El Salvador? Have you heard about that issue? Do you think we should?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. Why do you think we ought to be sending military advisers to El Salvador?

VOICE. Because there has been a lot of killing in El Salvador, with the nuns.

Senator DODD. Can you speak up in that microphone?

VOICE. Sure.

Senator DODD. You think we ought to be sending military advisers.

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. Why not tell us why?

VOICE. Because there have been a lot of killings in El Salvador and the issue does exist that more killings every day have happened. So far—I am not sure—they have killed in the civil war they are killing more than 250 innocent people.

Senator DODD. So, you think sending down military advisers will help reduce some of the killing.

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. OK. Does anyone have a different view? Do you have a different view? Why not get a mike. Speak up. Can you reach it?

VOICE. I do not think we should have military advisers in El Salvador.

Senator DODD. You are going to have to speak up, I do not think they can hear you.

VOICE. I do not think we should because after Vietnam we cannot afford to get involved in another world war, have so many more Americans killed after so many were killed in Vietnam.

Senator DODD. You think what we would be looking at is another Vietnam?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. Did you have a comment you wanted to make?

VOICE. I think they should send military advisers to help El Salvador handle guns and things so they won't be attacked by the people who are killing their people.

Senator DODD. So, you think we ought to be sending military advisers.

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. Let us see if we cannot get another issue. I notice this group is about equally divided between young men and young women, and there has been a very big issue in the country recently over the equal rights amendment.

How many of you know about the equal rights amendment? You have all heard about the equal rights amendment?

Now, I do not want any of the young ladies to answer this question, I want just the young men to answer this question; all right?

How many young men think that we ought to have an equal rights amendment for women—young men?

That is a pretty good response from these young men. How many of you think that we do not need the equal rights amendment, how many men? You had better be careful, you had better get out of this room pretty quickly. [Laughter.]

How many young women, now? Let us do the young women. How many of you think we ought to have an equal rights amendment?

All right, it looks like an overwhelming response.

Let me ask you something. There has been a lot of talk, and I am very impressed with how much you know about different subject matters, El Salvador, handgun control, and so forth.

Let me ask you about inflation. You have heard a lot of talk. All those letters said inflation was the biggest problem. Is that true, inflation was the biggest problem?

VOICES. Yes.

Senator DODD. That is what I gathered.

Now, we have heard of a lot of suggestions on how we might beat inflation. You have heard everybody making different suggestions. Let me mention a couple of them to you and see if you are familiar with them.

You have heard people talk about balancing the Federal budget, cutting down Federal expenditures, Federal spending. Do you understand that?

VOICE. Yes.

VOICE. No.

Senator DODD. That is one option that has been suggested. Another is to have wage and price controls, to put controls on wages and prices of goods. That has been a second suggestion that would help us solve our inflationary problems.

A third has been to have real controls over energy prices. That is not a major suggestion, but one that said, "Control energy prices and you can control inflation."

Let me ask you how many of you think that we ought to, in this year or in the next couple of years balance the Federal budget.

How many of you would balance the Federal budget right away, if you could? Have you heard about that as a suggestion?

VOICES. Yes.

Senator DODD. How many of you think it is not that important to balance the Federal budget, but to try and see that we provide services for people who need them? That it is more important to provide the services, not as important to balance the budget. Do you understand my question?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. How many of you think we ought to do that? Raise your hands. So, more of you think we ought to balance the budget right away as a way of dealing with inflation; is that right?

VOICES. Yes.

Senator DODD. How about controlling prices and wages, putting controls on prices and wages, how many of you think we ought to do that? How many would oppose that, think that is a bad idea?

That is a question that is a little more difficult, I gather, then.

All right, let me ask you about the question of foreign aid. Now, some of you mentioned in letters that you thought it was important we send

food and medicine, and teachers to other parts of the world. Now if we are going to try and balance that budget it is going to be a little difficult.

But how many of you think it is just as important to be helpful to people around the world as it is right here at home? How many of you think we ought to be sending food, medicine, teachers and so forth around the world?

How many of you think we ought to take for our first priority to take care of things at home and not worry so much about things that go on around the world? How many of you accept that view?

So, more of you think we ought to be doing things around the globe. All right.

Any more comments or questions that any of you have? Yes. You will have to speak up.

VOICE. Income taxes.

Senator DODD. Income taxes. Go ahead.

VOICE. If our parents would have to pay less taxes we would be able to buy more things, paying less taxes, and there would be more money for us.

Senator DODD. Where are you from?

VOICE. Herndon, and my name is Tommy.

If it cost less, there would be more money for us kids.

Senator DODD. So, you think we ought to cut taxes. You have a comment. Try and reach that microphone. Speak up, just pipe right up.

VOICE. My birthday was April 17 and I got \$10. And my mother had to borrow it because she did not have enough money because of the taxes, a lot of taxes.

Senator DODD. And she had to borrow your \$10 to help pay her taxes?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. How many of the others have heard similar stories like that? Do you have similar stories, your parents are talking about taxes a lot? Around April 15, do they get kind of angry at home when they think they have to send in the money for the taxes?

What other questions or comments might some of you have? Let me get somebody else. How about you, young man?

What is your name, young man?

SCOTT HEDDRICK. Scott Heddrick. If things were cheaper it would take care of inflation.

Senator DODD. Where are you from, Scott?

SCOTT HEDDRICK. Manassas, Va.

Senator DODD. Manassas, Va. And you think if everyone would just voluntarily show some restraint on prices, people in business, that would help.

SCOTT HEDDRICK. Yes.

Senator DODD. That is a pretty good suggestion. How about you, young man? Use the microphone and tell us who you are.

SIMON CLARK. I am Simon Clark and I tend to agree with him. If we lowered the prices on some of these things more people would buy more products, and if more people buy the products the businesses get a better profit and you help the economy.

Senator DODD. Do you think Government ought to be telling business what their prices ought to be, or do you think we ought to let business try and voluntarily lower their prices?

SIMON CLARK. I think the Government should do that.

Senator DODD. The Government should tell them, OK.

Come around front here, this young lady. Come on in here and tell us your name.

MOLLY McCARTHY. My name is Molly McCarthy.

Senator DODD. Molly McCarthy.

MOLLY McCARTHY. My family has a friend that lives in Upper Marlboro and they told her they were going to remove her house, they want to make a road there, and she has absolutely no money at all. So, when they tried to move her house, it broke down. They promised her they would make her a new house, and that was 3 months ago, or longer, and they still have not done it.

Senator DODD. They still have not done it.

MOLLY McCARTHY. No.

Senator DODD. That is a serious problem. Is anyone helping with that out there in Upper Marlboro?

MOLLY McCARTHY. I don't know.

Senator DODD. I bet if you mentioned it to your parents that you think someone ought to help out that person, I bet they will. All right?

Right behind here, why not come up here? What is your name?

ERIC TIM. My name is Eric Tim. I think one of our major problems are drugs.

Senator DODD. Drugs?

ERIC TIM. Sometimes students take drugs to help them feel better because they have tension when the teachers and parents are on their backs. I think you should have teachers and parents when the child is on drugs talk with him, suggesting counseling or something to help him.

Senator DODD. Now, all of you in this room are between the ages of 9 and 13; is that right?

VOICES. Yes.

Senator DODD. You come from a lot of different States all across the country. Are drugs a problem when you are in school?

VOICE. Yes.

VOICE. No.

Senator DODD. How many of you think they are, that you are aware of in your own school. Let me see those who say no, they do not know of any problem in their own schools with that. So, more of you say that is not a problem.

A couple more questions.

Can you get a microphone down over here? What is your name, young lady. Come up here and use this microphone. You have to tell us your name and speak loudly and clearly in that microphone so we can hear you.

SHARON HEWITT. My name is Sharon Hewitt and I am from Stanton Elementary School. I want to know why poor people have to pay taxes and rich don't. [Laughter and applause.]

Senator DODD. Now, when you see my good friend Dave Stockman this morning, I want you to pipe right up and ask him that same question.

Well, you know, it is not exactly that, but it seems that way, that some people in the upper income levels pay less of a percentage of their income in taxes than people at the lower income levels. That is true primarily because there are not as many what they call "tax

loopholes" or advantages for people at the lower income levels than the higher income levels.

Do you understand that?

What is your name?

SHARON HEWITT. Sharon Hewitt.

Senator DODD. Sharon, that is one of the reasons why there are fewer advantages for people who make less money to invest some of their money in what they call "tax shelters," where you can invest your money and then take what they call a "tax break" each year to avoid the higher level of taxes you might have to pay. That is one of the reasons.

But this year we are going to try and see if we cannot do something about that, to make the tax payments more equitable, more fair. Good question, though.

You right here, you have to speak into that microphone otherwise I cannot hear you.

TIMOTHY CARTER. My name is Timothy Carter. I agree with the boy and girl who said drugs. A friend of mine took 50 pills. We don't know what kind of drugs. So, she is in the hospital and she won't come out for a year and-a-half.

Senator DODD. Did she get them at home?

TIMOTHY CARTER. Yes.

Senator DODD. At home?

TIMOTHY CARTER. Yes. If it would have been 15 to 25 more seconds later, she would have been dead.

Senator DODD. That is a real serious problem.

There are some young people over here. Why not come over here? Can you reach that microphone? Why do not some of you who have some questions come over here and we will try and answer them.

CASSANDRA BUTLER. My name is Cassandra Butler.

Senator DODD. Cassandra, can you speak into that microphone?

CASSANDRA BUTLER. I am a victim of separation between my parents. I live with my grandparents and my father. My mother lives in New York.

My brothers and I, we have become pretty close because of this, but you know, sometimes we try to talk about our mother with my grandmother, and sometimes she will neglect to answer or change the subject.

It is kind of hard on us. My little brother, he is 6 years old. He will talk about my mother and then my grandmother will change the subject, and you can tell he is going to cry.

But you know, we try to talk about the subject and it is not very easy for us. So, I just suggest that we do have a place where we can talk.

Senator DODD. Where younger people can have a chance and talk, is that what you mean?

CASSANDRA BUTLER. Yes.

Senator DODD. Was it inflationary problems or things like that?

CASSANDRA BUTLER. No; it is the separation. I think my mother took pretty good care of us, but a lot of people say she wasn't very—what is the word?

She is an independent woman, I think. People will say "She did not take care of you." She was married at 15. She had me at 15. So, that she was not very responsible or anything.

Senator DODD. I think she has a very pretty daughter and a very intelligent one. Thank you for your comment.

I will take a couple more. I have already asked you something? I am sorry. Can you reach that right there?

VOICE. I think more money should be given to research like marine biology and things like that, budget cuts should not affect that because we need the research.

Senator DODD. In marine biology?

VOICE. And stuff like that.

Senator DODD. All right. Over here. Let us try down at this end. Do you have a microphone, is that one working right there?

VOICE. I think that education is a very important part of a child's life, and when I grow up I want to go to college. Right now, the expense to go to college is too much. If I don't have the money to go to college they won't give me a job because most people don't get jobs if they don't go to college or something like that.

I think they should lower the prices of college because people want to grow up to be somebody and they can't make it in a world like this because this world is too hard.

Senator DODD. You think that college is getting awfully expensive to go to; is that what you are worried about?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. Do your parents talk about that? Do they talk about college and how expensive it is?

VOICE. Yes. That is how come I think that some people don't go to college. Some of them don't go to college because they didn't learn nothing in high school or something like that; but some of them are very smart and they want to go but they can't because they don't have enough money.

Senator DODD. All right. We have one of our experts here, economic experts. Come over here, if you have a question. What is your question?

VOICE. My question is, do you know why President Reagan cut off jobs for my mother? He cut my mother off and my mom has to get money from my grandma so she can pay the rent.

Senator DODD. Where did your mother work, she lost her job.

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. Where was she working?

VOICE. At a bank.

Senator DODD. And you think the President took her job away?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. I do not think the President intended to do that. I would not put the direct blame there. Do you put the direct blame there, do you think he is directly responsible?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. You do. All right.

This young lady right over here, with the red ribbon in her hair.

JULIE BENTON. My name is Julie Benton and I don't see why the people that are rich and wealthy, they spend their money on things they don't really need. Most of them don't give it to the people that really need it.

Senator DODD. You think they ought to be sharing their money with other people?

JULIE BENTON. Yes.

Senator DODD. All right. Right behind here, with the tie on. Go ahead.

VOICE. I think a big problem is that people don't communicate enough. If there were more centers where people could go to communicate with the families and relatives, that could cut down on desertions and divorces, and things like that.

Senator DODD. How would you recommend that, what would you suggest?

VOICE. Things like more centers where people can go and just talk their problems over with their family.

Senator DODD. You think that would help a lot if they talked more with each other.

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. They cannot do that at home? You think it is hard to do it at home?

VOICE. Yes; because the TV and all. Most people just sit in front of the TV when they have their free time.

Senator DODD. They do not sit around and talk at the dining room table, or in the living room?

VOICE. Well, yes, but that is not really enough time. They need times like the weekends to go some places and talk.

Senator DODD. Without a TV.

VOICE. Yes, sir.

Senator DODD. No TV's in the centers; is that what you would insist upon?

VOICE. Well, not really.

Senator DODD. You would have a little bit of TV time?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. But more restricted TV time.

VOICE. Because people watch too much TV. I am not saying to cut out TV, but if we were to limit TV a little bit so that people would have time to talk, they would talk.

Senator DODD. Do you think people at home watch TV too much? How many of you think there is too much watching television at home at night?

These media people love me asking that question: Too much TV news?

VOICE. Yes. [Laughter.]

Senator DODD. All right—one more question. Oh, you are going to make me feel terrible. All right, down here at this end. Come up here; get a microphone right there.

Mark USHER. I am Mark Usher.

Senator DODD. Oh, Mark, you were the first speaker.

Mark USHER. I think the most difficult problem is alcohol abuse. Nobody kills people; they just kill themselves because if they drink a whole lot of alcohol and go out and drive, that is the most difficult problem. If they are real drunk, they crash and that is the problem of accidents and every thing. They might go crazy if they drink alcohol.

Senator DODD. So—alcohol abuse. You think the Federal Government should put more pressure on the State government to have stricter laws on alcohol abuse?

Mark USHER. Yes.

Senator DODD. That is a very important issue.

All right. I wish we could go on all morning, but really, we have gone about as far as we can go.

Marjorie Benton tells me there is something else that she wants to do, so I am going to ask everyone if they would just step back a little bit. Can we do it right here? All right, what is it we have to do?

VOICE. Senator Dodd, this is something to thank you for.

Mrs. BENTON. There is more.

VOICE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DODD. Are these signed by everybody in the room?

VOICE. Yes.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much.

VOICE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DODD. This is very nice. It says, "Certificate of Appreciation" presented to me "in grateful recognition of your participation in Save the Children Day."

I thank you all very much, too, for your comments and responsiveness to questions. A lot of you have some very good ideas.

I hope we will be able to do this each year and some of you will come back. You do not have to wait for "Save the Children Day" to write letters about things that you think are important. If you think that there are some things that we ought to know about in Congress, then I think you ought to write your Congressmen and your Senators and let them know how you feel.

So, you keep up that participation and your interest, and we will be a better country.

I thank every one of you today for coming down here and participating in this program. I look forward to seeing some of you again next year.

Again, I want to thank Marge Benton, the chairperson of Save the Children for the fine work she has done, and the staff of Save the Children for the fine work they have done over the years in this program and so many others.

Thank you all very much for coming this morning. [Applause.]

Senator DODD. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11 a.m. the subcommittee adjourned, subject to call of the Chair.]